



CHALLENGE FOR FILM-MAKERS

Create props (especially weapons) that:

- look real (for close-up shots)
- withstand rough handling and a lot of use
- are light, safe, and easy to use by lots of people (for background shots).

RELATED ACTIVITIES

[Chain Mail](#)

[Scaling](#)

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

BEFORE

Brainstorm about the challenges facing the makers of film props:

- What materials might a real sword or other weapon be made from?
- What problems for filming might this lead to?
- How might these problems be overcome?

TEACHING POINTS

e.g. heavy for actors to carry, might get damaged during filming, might harm people or property, expensive and time-consuming to make in large numbers

DURING

See the props of different sizes in the Scaling interactive (zone 13).

Feel the props made of steel, alloy, and rubber in the Spot the Difference interactive (zone 18).

Focus questions:

- Why do some props need to be very detailed and real-looking?
- Are all the weapons of one type (e.g. swords) made of the same materials? If not, why not?

Three versions of props were made for different filming situations:

- the "hero" version for close-up shots (using materials with the look and feel of the real thing and with authentic details)
- the "stunt" version for action shots (using materials that can be handled roughly without breaking)
- the "background" version for background shots (using light materials that look like the real thing from a distance).

AFTER

- Choose a movie prop that has some close-up detail (e.g. a weapon, headgear, a drinking goblet). Plan different ways to make that prop for:
 - close-up shots (so that it shows the detail)
 - action scenes (so that it doesn't break)
 - background shots (so that it can be used by many actors).
- Make one or all of the versions of the prop.
- Present and assess your work.